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IN SENATE OF THE UNITED STATES.

MESSAGE

FROM

THE PRESIDENT,

COMMUNICATING

The correspondence between the United States minister at London and authorities of the British government, in relation to a postal arrangement between the two countries.

MARCH 27, 1848.

Referred to the Committee on the Post Office and Post Roads, and ordered to be printed.

WASHINGTON, *March 27th*, 1848.

To the Senate of the United States:

I transmit herewith a report of the Secretary of State, with accompanying documents, in compliance with the resolution of the Senate of the 17th instant, requesting the President to communicate to that body "copies of a correspondence between the minister of the United States at London and any authorities of the British government, in relation to a postal arrangement between the two countries."

JAMES K. POLK.

DEPARTMENT OF STATE,
Washington, 24th March, 1848.

The Secretary of State, to whom has been referred the resolution of the Senate of the 17th instant, requesting the President to communicate to that body, "copies of the correspondence between the minister of the United States at London, and any authorities of the British government, in relation to a postal arrangement between the two countries," has the honor to report to the President the accompanying copies of papers.

Respectfully submitted,

JAMES BUCHANAN.

To the PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED STATES.

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Mr. Bancroft to Lord Palmerston.

The undersigned, envoy extraordinary and minister plenipotentiary of the United States of America, begs leave to draw the attention of Viscount Palmerston, her Majesty's principal secretary of state for foreign affairs, to a recent order from the post office department of this kingdom.

The United States having undertaken by authority of Congress, at the expense of the United States Treasury, through the Postmaster General of the United States, to institute a mail service and carry a mail between the American port of New York and the English port of Southampton, the British postmaster general has issued an order to charge every letter and newspaper thus brought, in addition to the American rates paid for their conveyance across the Atlantic in American steamers, the full British packet rates that would have been chargeable if they had been brought by British steamers.

The undersigned, inquiring on this subject, first at the foreign office, and next at the general post office, has been informed that the design of this charge is the protection of the British line of mail steamers and the revenue derived from that line.

The undersigned has further understood, that the levying of this extra charge is not made obligatory by act of parliament, but that a discretion on the subject rests with her Majesty's government.

Esteeming the order referred to inequitable in itself; specially unequal with regard to the United States; contrary to international comity; contrary to the spirit of existing conventions between the two countries; contrary to the wise policy of existing laws; contrary to the commercial interests of the two countries; and contrary to the interests of the respective British and American post office establishments, the undersigned begs leave, earnestly, to urge upon her Majesty's government, the propriety of immediately revoking it; and, until a full postal convention shall be entered into, to agree, as America has already agreed, that on letters brought into the respective countries, no charge shall be levied by either party, but for a service which that party has actually rendered.

The undersigned is fully persuaded that perseverance in the measure adopted by the British postmaster general, would, by the action of irresistible influences, in the end, certainly fail to increase the British revenue from the mail service. But he invites Lord Palmerston's attention to the subject on other grounds.

The measure is objected to by the undersigned, as in itself contrary to equity. For the British post offices to charge the British packet postage on letters which British packets have not carried, is to reap where it has not sown; to seek to appropriate profits justly due to others.

The Atlantic is not a close sea. The right to carry letters between England and the United States does not belong to England exclusively. Yet the British post office insists that, "if vessels are employed by the government of the United States to convey post letters," the British packet postage "will be chargeable on

letters conveyed by such vessels between the United Kingdom and the United States."

The first principles of justice imply that the wages are due to those who perform the work; where British packets perform it, to the British revenue; where the American packets perform it, to the American revenue.

The want of equity in the instructions alluded to becomes the more conspicuous when held in contrast with the conduct of America. The British mails by the British packets to Canada, and from Canada, are carried by the United States Post Office Department between Boston and St. Johns, in closed bags and boxes, by an extraordinary and most speedy conveyance, without any other charge than that of the American inland postage between those points. There is no super-addition of ship charges, or packet charges, or any other charges; and the inland postage is fixed by the most liberal construction on the part of the United States Post Office Department, at the very lowest rate of postage. On the letters and papers brought by the British post office line, and distributed from Boston throughout the United States, no other charge is added than that of the usual inland postage. On the first of this month, when the British mail steamer "Britannia," and the American mail steamer "Washington," were to sail on the same day for England, the advertisements of the American Post Office Department announced, side by side, that, on letters by the Britannia, the American inland postage only was to be paid; that, on letters by the Washington, the packet postage also, must be previously paid.

America made no packet charge on letters sent by the British packet, and she believes herself justified in expecting that no packet charge will be made here on letters sent by the American packet. The American Post Office Department limits its charge to the service it renders, and it believes itself justified in expecting that the British post office department will, in like manner, limit its charge to the service it renders.

The imposition of British packet postage on letters brought by American government packets, appears to the undersigned contrary to the usual comity of nations. The undersigned is not aware of any instance, where government packets have passed respectively between two nations, and where one of those nations has claimed to levy the packet postage on both lines for its own exclusive benefit.

The undersigned inclines to the belief that the recent act of the British postmaster general is as little sanctioned by precedent, as by natural equity. So entirely did the American Post Office Department rely on this comity, that, believing that the British post office department was fully aware of the establishment of the American line, and relying in unhesitating confidence on the disposition on this side of the Atlantic to reciprocate the liberal treatment received on the other, the American Postmaster General did not deem it necessary to send an agent in advance, to make a formal notification of his arrangements, and his views.

The measure referred to is at variance with the spirit of the commercial convention of the 3d July, 1815, between the United States and Great Britain. That convention agrees, that no charge whatever shall be imposed on the importation or exportation of any article to, or from, the United States, other than such as is payable on the importation or exportation of the same article to or from any other foreign country.

It is designed to place the United States on the footing of the most favored nations. It is a violation of the spirit of this agreement that, while France very properly derives, exclusively, all the pecuniary benefits of its own packet service, the British post office should, for the benefit of the British revenue, levy the full British packet postage on letters and papers conveyed by the American government packets.

The order of the British postmaster general is also still more plainly at variance with the spirit of existing laws. The undersigned applauds the frankness with which it has been avowed to him, what, indeed, is of itself apparent, that the object of the measure was to protect the line of British packets, and the British revenue derived from them. And it must be allowed that the measure, if persevered in, and not met by retaliatory measures on the part of America, is thoroughly well adapted to accomplish its end. The super-addition of the British packet postage to the American packet postage is, virtually, a discrimination in favor of British packets so onerous, as to be actually prohibitory in its character. And this is done at the very time when a liberal legislation is raising the imports of America from England to an extent without a parallel, and while America is indulging the belief that England sees that increase with satisfaction.

A protective system, that has existed for centuries, may plead its length of years as its excuse for lingering on in a gradual decline; but shall the system of monopoly be revived and applied where it never was applied before? Shall it be applied in a manner at once to inflict an injury on the American government, and to embarrass the intercourse of the American merchants and people with their correspondents in England? The natural consequences of such an attempt at monopoly on the part of the British government are too obvious to need comment.

Moreover, the undersigned may unhesitatingly believe that Lord Palmerston does not look for the chief benefits of the post office system in the mere revenue which it yields. Great Britain has honorably distinguished itself by a most liberal domestic postal system, and not only so, it has led the way in improving the international postal system of the European continent, and has done this plainly in the primary view to promote commercial, social, and literary and scientific intercourse. No nation has more openly proclaimed by its acts its consciousness that international correspondence sets in motion international commerce. Every mail bag, by every packet from America to England, promotes the commercial and manufacturing prosperity of this island. Is it of paramount importance to this government to embarrass that correspon-

dence, in the hope of a most uncertain gain to the post office revenue? Why should American correspondence be received less favorably in England than on the continent? Why should any portion of it be resisted and thrown back by a prohibitory tax?

The undersigned points to the acts of his own government as leaving no doubt of its readiness to continue and perfect a just and liberal policy in postal arrangements. If it be not continued and improved, the undersigned takes this occasion to say that the failure to establish it reciprocally, and all the consequences of such a failure, must be ascribed solely to the reluctance of her Majesty's government.

In conclusion, the undersigned renews his request, that the United Kingdom would, in this affair of their respective mail packets, treat the United States as the United States treat the United Kingdom; that is to say, that, until a formal postal convention between the two countries is framed, it would charge no more than the usual inland postage on the letters and papers transmitted to and from the United States, through the government packets of the United States.

The undersigned takes this occasion, &c.,

GEORGE BANCROFT.

Legation of the United States, *June* 18, 1847.

Lord Palmerston to Mr. Bancroft.

Foreign Office, *June* 22, 1847.

The undersigned, her Majesty's principal secretary of state for foreign affairs, has the honor to acknowledge the receipt of the official note addressed to him on the 18th instant by Mr. Bancroft, envoy extraordinary and minister plenipotentiary from the United States of America at this court, calling the attention of her Majesty's government to a recent order which has been issued by the British post office, directing that every letter and newspaper, brought to England by the steam vessels employed by the government of the United States to carry mails between New York and Southampton, shall be charged with the full British packet rates that would have been chargeable thereon if they had been brought by British steam vessels.

The undersigned has to inform Mr. Bancroft that he has referred his note upon this subject to the proper department of her Majesty's government; and he has the honor, &c.,

PALMERSTON.

Mr. Bancroft to Lord Palmerston.

UNITED STATES LEGATION,
London, June 30, 1847.

MY LORD: I am sure your lordship will excuse me for pressing upon your attention the official note which I had the honor to address to you on the 18th instant. I am compelled to invite the immediate decision of her Majesty's government upon the contents of that note, as the United States packet ship Washington is now at Southampton, and it is important for that vessel, for those who intend to send letters by it, and above all, for the United States government, to be informed as soon as possible of the decision of her Majesty's government respecting the imposition to which I have called your lordship's attention.

I have the honor, &c.,

GEORGE BANCROFT.

Mr. Bancroft to Lord Palmerston.

UNITED STATES LEGATION,
London, July 12, 1847.

The undersigned, envoy extraordinary and minister plenipotentiary of the United States of America, begs leave to express to Viscount Palmerston, her Majesty's principal secretary of state for foreign affairs, his great regret that the time appointed for the sailing of the United States mail steamer Washington, from Southampton to New York, arrived, and yet that no reply was received by the undersigned to his communications of the 18th and of the 30th of June, relating to the protective tax imposed by an order from the British post office department upon letters sent by that steamer.

The undersigned cannot but regard the subject as one calling for immediate consideration. The United States desire the most liberal postal arrangements with the United Kingdom; such as will foster friendly intercourse and promote commerce between the two nations. In that view, the United States ask and offer reciprocity, on the most liberal basis. But if her Majesty's government refuse that basis, and insist upon a discrimination in favor of its own mails, a duty will still remain to be performed by the undersigned, in order that the United States may, at the earliest day, be free from existing stipulations.

The undersigned desires to acquaint Lord Palmerston, and through him the appropriate branches of her Majesty's government, that Mr. S. Reeve Hobbie, the first assistant postmaster general of the United States, is now in London, and that with the cooperation of Mr. Hobbie, as special agent and deputy of the United States Postmaster General, the undersigned has full powers for

settling all questions relating to the postal intercourse between the United States and the United Kingdom.

The undersigned avails himself, &c.

GEORGE BANCROFT.

Mr. Bancroft to Lord Palmerston.

90 Eaton Square, *August* 16, 1847.

The undersigned, envoy extraordinary and minister plenipotentiary of the United States of America, begs leave once more to call the attention of Viscount Palmerston, her Majesty's principal secretary of state for foreign affairs, to the subject of a postal arrangement between the United States and Great Britain. During the time that the letter of the undersigned, of June 18, to Lord Palmerston, has remained without any answer from her Majesty's government, the undersigned has had time to write to his own government, and to receive answers twice from the other side of the Atlantic.

To make the whole subject entirely easy of arrangement, the undersigned has this day terminated the partial postal arrangement which heretofore existed, not with the disposition to refuse to the British government the advantages enjoyed under it, but to renew it on a broader basis, having equal reference to both nations.

The communication by letters and papers and packets between the two continents, is considered by the United States not merely as a source of revenue, but is still more highly prized as the channel through which business is increased, affection cherished, and intelligence communicated between America and Europe.

The undersigned is therefore instructed to offer, on the part of his government, the most liberal reciprocal arrangements. If Great Britain can devise, and will offer more liberal reciprocal terms, the undersigned doubts not his ability to accept them forthwith. Exact equality is the only *sine qua non* on which he must insist. If, which he cannot believe, Great Britain prefers a policy of impediments, the undersigned has only to remind the British government, that in interposing impediments, those impediments, or others warranted by them, will be adopted on the other side of the water.

And that Lord Palmerston may be able to state precisely what the undersigned esteems as a liberal reciprocal arrangement, (being only most happy if her Majesty's government can devise and will propose a more liberal one,) the undersigned proposes:

The letters and newspapers shall, as near as may be, come to the receiver of them whether in the United States, or in England, in Canada, the West Indies, Mexico, and other parts of America, or on the continent, or other islands of Europe, charged with the same postage, whether brought by the English steamer, or by the American steamer across the Atlantic.

Each post office may charge on the letters and packets received

respectively from the steamers of the other for distribution within its own country, its own inland postage, but shall superadd no post office charge, or packet charge, or ship charge, or any other charge whatsoever.

On newspapers or printed matter so received and distributed, the United States shall not charge more than three farthings a newspaper, or a sheet, and Great Britain shall not charge more than one penny, whether distributed in their respective countries, or forwarded through them.

For Canada, or for the West Indies, and other parts of America for which the United States have mails, letters and packets received from British steamers, shall be forwarded by the United States post office with no charge but that which would be charged on similar letters and packets mailed by an American citizen resident at the place of arrival of the British steamer, and *vice versa*. Letters for the continent, or other parts of Europe, received from American steamers, shall be forwarded with no other charge than the charge on similar letters and packets mailed by a British citizen resident at the port at which the American steamer may arrive.

The United States will forward closed mails from Britain through the United States to Canada, and to the West Indies, and other countries in America, in so far as the United States have established, or shall establish lines to them, and Great Britain shall, in like manner, forward closed mails from the United States to the continent of Europe, where Great Britain has established, or shall establish lines, subject to postage as above, to be adjusted in the usual manner.

It shall be a constant instruction from each government to its post office department to preserve the most perfect equality in all arrangements, and this being provided for to further in the freest manner postal intercourse between the two countries.

Inasmuch as the United States are from principle opposed to deriving any revenue from the mail service beyond its expenses, the undersigned is prepared further to agree that it shall be open to either party to propose a reduction of postage, and in the event of the refusal of the other party to agree to such reduction, the party proposing it may proceed to reduce its own packet charges.

If these principles are agreed to by her Majesty's government, all details, especially relating to the transmission of letters with or without pre-payment of postage, and the consequent regulation of accounts, may be left to arrangement between the two departments, without further troubling the lords of the treasury.

The undersigned avails himself, &c..

GEORGE BANCROFT.

Mr. Maberly to Mr. Bancroft.

GENERAL POST OFFICE.
August 17, 1847.

SIR: In the absence of the Postmaster General, I have the honor to acknowledge the receipt from your excellency, yesterday, of a notice given by the Postmaster General of the United States, in pursuance of the power reserved to him by the seventh article of the agreement of the 14th February, 1845, and in which he is pleased to declare that such agreement as well as all other agreements in existence between the post office of Great Britain, or with any of the subordinate officers, and the post office of the United States, shall be determined and annulled from and after three calendar months from the delivery of this notice.

As I understand that all agreements of every description between the post offices of the United States and those of the North American provinces are annulled by this notice, I shall communicate it to the various deputy postmaster generals in those provinces, desiring them to comply with its provisions.

Although the subject is not expressly mentioned, I presume from the terms of the notice, the United States post office relinquishes the privilege which it now possesses of transmitting its correspondence unpaid to the North American provinces, and obtaining the postage due to it by means of the postmasters of those colonies.

I have the honor to be, &c.,

W. MABERLY.

His excellency, GEORGE BANCROFT, &c., &c., &c.,
United States Legation.

Lord Palmerston to Mr. Bancroft.

The undersigned, her Majesty's principal secretary of state for foreign affairs, has the honor to inform Mr. Bancroft, envoy extraordinary and minister plenipotentiary of the United States of America at this court, that he has received from the proper department of her Majesty's government a letter which enables him to answer the note addressed to him by Mr. Bancroft, of the 18th of June last, on the subject of an order which has been issued by the General Post Office stating that letters and newspapers, either brought to England from the United States, or despatched from England to the United States by way of Southampton, in the steam vessels employed by the government of the United States to carry mails between New York and Southampton, are liable to be charged with the full amount of the British packet rates of postage which would be chargeable thereon if such letters were conveyed by British packets.

The undersigned now begs leave to explain that the post office order, above referred to, did not introduce any new rate of postage,

specially imposed to meet the particular case of the employment of American steam vessels to carry mails between New York and Southampton. But the object of the notice so issued by her Majesty's Postmaster General was to inform the postmasters throughout the kingdom that the American vessels in question were *packets*, and that the rates of packet postage, and not the ordinary rates of ship letter postage ought, therefore, to be charged upon letters conveyed by those packets.

The undersigned begs also to state that the levying of this charge is not a new measure, but is made simply in fulfilment of the ordinary law applicable to such cases; for the act of the 3d and 4th Victoria, cap. 96, expressly declares that all letters not weighing more than half an ounce which shall be transmitted by the post between the United Kingdom and the United States of North America, shall be chargeable with an uniform rate of one shilling, and the 71st section of the same act provides that the expression "by the post" shall be understood as including the transmission of post letters by packet boats. The undersigned would beg also to explain that the United States is not the only country to which the abovementioned act has been applied, but that, on the contrary, the regulation by which packet postage is charged upon letters and newspapers conveyed by foreign packets, has been invariably acted upon in regard to letters conveyed by the mail packets of all foreign countries. The last occasion on which this regulation was so applied happened in 1844, when the Belgian government, having established packets to run twice a week between Dover and Ostend, letters conveyed by those packets were ordered to be charged with precisely the same rates of postage which are chargeable on letters conveyed by British mail packets.

But Mr. Bancroft conceives that letters conveyed by the American packets ought to be charged in this country with the inland rates of postage only; and he states that when the American Post Office Department established those packets, they felt, no doubt, that the letters carried by those packets would be so dealt with.

But the undersigned begs to remark that the Postmaster General of the United States, in a memorandum which he transmitted on the 26th December last to the British minister at Washington, with reference to a proposed arrangement for the conveyance of mails between New York and Montreal, said that "the Postmaster General of the United States is desirous that a mutual arrangement be made between the two governments, that will dispense with the charge of ship postage on the letters brought into the respective countries by the mail lines of each; that is, that such postage shall not be charged in the United States on letters brought into them by the Cunard line of steamers, and that it shall not be charged in Great Britain on letters taken into it by the mail steamers in the employment of the government of the United States;" and the undersigned would observe that this passage seems to show that the United States post office was at that time aware that, under the existing regulations of the British post office, letters brought to the

United Kingdom by American packets, would be chargeable with postage for sea conveyance, or what the Postmaster General of the United States calls "ship postage," in addition to inland postage.

Mr. Bancroft further remarks, that the government of the United States charges only the inland rate of postage on the British closed mails to and from Canada; but the undersigned would beg to observe, that the transit rate which is paid, by agreement, for this correspondence, was fixed without any regard to the inland rates of postage charged in the United States on letters conveyed to and from Canada; for Mr. Wickliffe, then Postmaster General of the United States, with whom the agreement was concluded, stated that the terms which he demanded were founded upon the arrangement made between Great Britain and France, for the conveyance of the Indian mails through the French territory.

It is, indeed, true that one of the articles of the agreement, respecting the Canada postage, provided that if the rates of postage in the United States should be reduced by law, the payment stipulated to be made by Great Britain should be adjusted so as not to exceed the rates of postage which would be charged upon the letters, if they were posted in the United States. But this provision was qualified by a clause, stipulating on the part of the United States, that no reduction of this rate of postage should be made which would bring down the aggregate amount paid by Great Britain, so as to make it less than the cost of conveyance; and her Majesty's government have lately received an account from the United States post office, in which the transit rate to be paid for the Canadian closed mails is reduced to the amount of the inland rate charged in the United States, for the distance over which those mails are carried, with an addition of twenty-five per cent. to cover the loss supposed to be sustained by the United States post office, in consequence of the letters being weighed in bulk instead of singly.

Mr. Bancroft also states, that upon the letters and papers brought by the British post office steamers, and distributed from Boston throughout the United States, no other charge is made than that of the usual inland postage. But it would appear that Mr. Bancroft has not been correctly informed upon this point; because a charge for ship letter postage is made upon every letter contained in the British mails, the amount being six cents for each letter delivered in Boston, and two cents for each letter delivered in any other part of the United States, the charge in the latter case being, of course, added to the inland postage.

The undersigned begs leave, in conclusion, to assure Mr. Bancroft that her Majesty's government, so far from being disposed to deal illiberally with the United States in this matter, have, on the contrary, favored that country with regard to the postage charged upon its correspondence; for, in 1839, when her Majesty's government reduced the packet postage on letters to and from the British American provinces, from 2*s.* 2*d.* to 1*s.*, (in which latter sum was included all charge for inland conveyance within the United Kingdom,) that reduction of postage was extended to letters conveyed

to and from the United States; and, although her Majesty's government do not usually grant such advantages to foreign countries without requiring reciprocal reductions in favor of Great Britain, no such demand was on that occasion addressed to the United States; and this reduction took place some time before the general reduction of postage on the British colonial correspondence.

The undersigned takes this opportunity of informing Mr. Bancroft, that he has had the honor to receive, and that he has referred to the proper department of her Majesty's government, Mr. Bancroft's note of the 16th of August, stating the terms upon which he has been authorized by his government to propose that Great Britain and the United States should conclude an arrangement for the transmission of mails between the two countries.

The undersigned has the honor, &c.,

PALMERSTON.

Foreign Office, *August* 27, 1847.

Mr. Bancroft to Lord Palmerston, August 28, 1847.

Mr. Bancroft, the American minister, has received Viscount Palmerston's answer of yesterday to his note of the 18th of June, and in consequence of it desires a conference with Lord Palmerston. Learning that Lord Palmerston will come to town to-morrow, Mr. Bancroft begs leave to ask a short interview at his lordship's earliest convenience.

Mr. Bancroft to Lord Palmerston, August 31, 1847.

The undersigned, envoy extraordinary and minister plenipotentiary of the United States of America, having received from Viscount Palmerston, her Majesty's principal secretary of state for foreign affairs, a note, dated the 27th instant, in reply to the letter of the undersigned of the 18th of June last, complaining of the double postage imposed on letters brought to England in American packets, the undersigned desired a conference with Lord Palmerston, in the hope of effecting an immediate practical result.

Having, this day, had such conference, and Lord Palmerston having informed the undersigned of the necessity Lord Palmerston is under of consulting another department of government before giving a reply, and having invited the undersigned to reduce what he had to say to writing, he seizes the earliest moment to do so.

On the 12th of July last, the undersigned announced to Lord Palmerston that Mr. Hobbie, the First Assistant Postmaster General of the United States, being in London, the undersigned was prepared to assist in making a postal arrangement between America and the United Kingdom. On the 16th of this month, the undersigned communicated to Lord Palmerston the terms which he is

authorized by the American government to propose. These terms Lord Palmerston has now under consideration. The delay in proceeding with the negotiation has not rested with the undersigned. Pending the negotiation, the undersigned proposes that her Majesty's government should suspend the action of the post office order, No. 9, of June, 1847, imposing double postage on letters brought by American packets; in which case the undersigned will undertake, in return, that pending the negotiation, the United States will omit the retaliatory measure of double postage on English and Canadian letters, which otherwise must take place. Lord Palmerston was pleased to say that Great Britain would have no ground to complain of such retaliatory measures; but the undersigned will certainly complain greatly if circumstances, beyond his control, put upon him the most irksome necessity of recommending them.

The undersigned having thus found himself obliged to make this further communication on the subject of postal arrangements, is constrained to repeat what he had the honor to say to Lord Palmerston, that the explanations contained in Lord Palmerston's note, of the 27th instant, will be far from reconciling the government and people of the United States to the British imposition of double postage on letters conveyed in American packets.

Lord Palmerston refers to the act of the 3d and 4th Victoria, chapter 96, as the authority for the double charge. But it is agreed that a discretion rests with the treasury board in the application of that authority; and, indeed, the United States, of all nations in the world, are now alone singled out to suffer from the imposition of double postage.

Lord Palmerston, it is true, remarks that this regulation was applied to the Belgian packets in 1844. But it could have been only as an experiment, and for an exceedingly short period. The experiment must, at once, have failed, for Belgian and English packets ply, and have long plied, indiscriminately between Dover and Ostend, and the postage in England for receiving or transmitting a letter is no higher by the Belgian than by the English steamer. The precedent of Belgium is then against the imposition of the double charge.

Lord Palmerston appears to think that the Postmaster General of the United States must have been prepared for the imposition of double postage, because he proposes there should be no charge of ship postage at all in either country. The undersigned cannot see why Mr. Johnson should have expected his fair and candid proposition should have been summarily dismissed. The undersigned had, till now, supposed Mr. Johnson's offer could not have come to the knowledge of the British government. The undersigned cannot but express surprise that so fair and candid a proposition, conveyed through the estimable British minister at Washington, should have had for its answer a post office order imposing double postage, without any notification to the American government whatever.

But surprise becomes still greater when Lord Palmerston seeks

to invalidate the allusion of the undersigned to the indisputable fact, that on the British closed mails, to and from Canada, the United States charge only inland postage. Lord Palmerston's argument is, that the transit rate was fixed without any regard to the inland rates of postage in the United States. Lord Palmerston can have been but partially informed on this subject. The people of the United States, taking into consideration the established rates of postage, and desirous to manifest their disposition to live in special good neighborhood with England, and thinking their high rates of postage might be an obstacle to intercourse across their territory, freely and purposely authorised Mr. Wickliffe, then the Postmaster General, to adopt a lower transit rate for England than was paid by Americans themselves. But the people of the United States did not forsee that Lord Palmerston would make this discrimination of the United States in favor of letters transmitted from British packets through America, a reason for the imposition of double postage on lettters transmitted from American packets through England.

But as the contract referred to provided for a still further reduction of the transit rates, if a general reduction of the American rates should make the regular postage less than the rates fixed in the agreement with England, Lord Palmerston next finds in the contract reference to the American inland rates of postage; but finds also the provision qualified by a clause stipulating indemnity to the United States against loss. The answer is plain: the contract was so qualified only because her Majesty's government first qualified it by stipulating for extraordinary means of conveyance, at uncertain times and at extraordinary speed.

Lord Palmerston is quite right in supposing the undersigned not to have been correctly informed as to the charge of two cents on letters brought into the United States by ships from abroad. It is true that by the act of Congress of 3d March, 1825, two cents on each of such letters are exacted; but the law had its motive not in the interest of the public treasury, but in the desire to promote intercourse with all nations. The little pittance of ship money thus collected is paid to the ship master, if not a public officer. The United States government is not at liberty to pay the public officers of other countries, and is entitled to the service of its own. If this little charge, so small in amount as to be almost imperceptible, less, per cent., in amount, than the extreme variation in the legal valuation of the pound sterling in the United States, continues to be charged on some part, and some part only, of letters brought by the Cunard line, it is only because her Majesty's government has not given attention to the repeatedly expressed wish of America to abolish it.

Lord Palmerston finally urges, as evidence of British liberality, that Great Britain did America the *favor* to reduce postage on American letters from 2*s*. 2*d*. to 1*s*. for America as well as for the British provinces. Great Britain at great cost long supported a colonial mail. At length it reduced the postage; improved the mail service; extended it to the United States; and the mails increased

perhaps more than a hundred fold; so that what had been an excessive burthen on the British Treasurybecame a remunerating business. The undersigned rejoices that it proved so. Every one must feel satisfaction at this result. But why should this system be spoken of as one of privileges and *favors!* It is rather the testimony of experience against the system of privilege, protection, and *favor*, and in support of liberal reciprocity and the offices of good neighborhood.

The undersigned renews the proposition that pending the negotiation for a postal arrangement, her Majesty's government should suspend the exaction of double postage on letters conveyed by American packets; the undersigned offering, in return, that the United States will, in that case, pending the negotiation, forego the retaliatory measures which Lord Palmerston has very candidly observed it would be the perfect right of America to adopt, without giving any cause of complaint to this government, with which the undersigned is instructed to cultivate the most friendly relations.

The undersigned takes the occasion, &c.

GEORGE BANCROFT.

United States' Legation,
90 *Eaton Square*, 31*st August*, 1847.

Lord Clanricarde to Mr. Brodhead.

Carlton Terrace,
September 13, 1847.

Lord Clanricarde presents his compliments to Mr. Brodhead, and has the honor to inform him that Lord Clanricarde is about to submit to her Majesty's government the basis upon which he may be authorized to propose to Mr. Bancroft, upon that Minister's return to London, a new postal convention between Great Britain and the United States.

He wishes to lose no time in making this communication to Mr. Brodhead, because he thinks it probable that Mr. Brodhead may be, in consequence of it, desirous to withdraw the notice lately given by Mr. Bancroft to the British post office, to terminate all existing postal conventions between the two countries. For that notice may occasion expense and trouble, which, if incurred, may delay the conclusion of a convention, and must be useless, if the propositions of her Majesty's government should prove acceptable to the minister of the United States.

Mr. Brodhead to Lord Clanricarde.

90 Eaton Square,
13*th September*, 1847.

Mr. Brodhead presents his compliments to the Marquis of Clanricarde, and has the honor to acknowledge the receipt of his Lordship's note of this day. Mr. Brodhead will lose no time in communicating to Mr. Bancroft Lord Clanricarde's suggestion respecting the immediate withdrawal of the notice lately given to the British post office, to terminate all existing postal conventions between the United Kingdom and the United States.

But, in the meantime, Mr. Brodhead begs leave to state to Lord Clanricarde, that in a note which Mr. Bancroft addressed to Lord Palmerston on the 31st of August last, in reply to a communication from his Lordship of the 27th of that month, Mr. Bancroft himself suggested that "pending the negotiation, the undersigned proposes that her Majesty's government should suspend the action of the post office order No. 9, of June, 1847, imposing double postage on letters brought by American packets; in which case the undersigned will undertake in return, that, pending the negotiation, the United States will omit the retaliatory measure of double postage on English and Canadian letters, which must otherwise take place.

Lord Clanricarde to Mr. Brodhead.

General Post Office,
September 15, 1847.

Lord Clanricarde presents his compliments to Mr. Brodhead. Mr. Bancroft and Mr. Brodhead are under a misapprehension if they imagine that any new rate, whatever, has been imposed upon letters brought to England in American packets by any order of the British government in 1847.

The rates to be levied upon letters brought from the United States of America, either in government packets or in private ships, were settled by law some years ago. The British government voluntarily and spontaneously lowered those rates from their former to their present amount in 1839. No change in the postage to be paid by letters carried in packets has taken place since that time; but the establishment of a new packet by the United States government has led to a novel application, in the present year, of the rate established eight years since.

Lord Clanricarde will be obliged if Mr. Brodhead will let him know Mr. Bancroft's decision, as soon after it has reached him as may be convenient, because Lord Clanricarde has transmitted to the deputy postmaster general of Canada, instructions not to receive unpaid letters sent from the United States into Canada after the 16th of November, and to take other steps, which will be ren-

dered necessary, if the notice given to the British post office should continue in force.

Mr. Bancroft to Lord Clanricarde.

PARIS, *September* 25, 1847.

MY LORD: Mr. Brodhead has forwarded to me, at this place, your loadship's two notes of September 13th and 15th. I arrived here but last evening, and I give the best pledge of my desire to regulate our postal affairs, promptly and practically, by avoiding further discussion, giving up the purpose of my visit here, and returning to London forthwith. I shall, accordingly, on an intimation that an interview is desirable, be ready to wait upon your lordship at your house, or at the general post office, on the morning of Wednesday next, at any hour that may be agreeable to you, in the hope of coming to a practical result.

Meantime, I assure your lordship, I shall exceedingly deprecate the necessity of retaliatory measures on our part. My repugnance to them is extreme. The American government desires to avoid them. The American people, who hold all their servants to a strict and swift responsibility, in small things as well as in great, desire the continuance of neighborly offices between the two countries, and wish me to contribute to their continuance. I have, accordingly, for more than three months past, earnestly pressed for the formation of a postal arrangement to settle every question. In July I called to London the American First Assistant Postmaster General, in view of immediately framing one. Seeing that the usages of the British government brought delay, I offered, through Lord Palmerston, in August last, in behalf of America, to forego retaliatory measures during the negotiation, if, in return, the post office order of June last, inflicting a double postage, should be at once suspended till the negotiation fails or succeeds.

I do not conceal from myself that the British government will be immensely the gainer in such a provisionary arrangement, as we have one packet, and England many; but the offer is right in principle, and, therefore, the American people will approve it. The answer to my offer must govern my conduct.

So soon as I receive your lordship's counter proposition for a new postal convention, be assured, my lord, it shall receive my instant attention.

I have the honor to be, &c., &c.

GEORGE BANCROFT.

The Rt. Hon. the MARQUIS OF CLANRICARDE,

&c., &c., &c.

Lord Clanricarde to Mr. Bancroft.

G. P. O., *September* 30, 1847.

DEAR SIR: I send you a paper containing the propositions which we discussed yesterday.

I think you will find them reasonable, and well calculated for the object we have, each of us, in view.

I have the honor, &c.,

CLANRICARDE.

G. BANCROFT, Esq., *&c., &c.*

[Enclosure.]

Her Majesty's government proposes to negotiate a postal convention with the United States, which, at the same time that it will afford to the inhabitants of the two countries the greatest facilities consistent with the maintenance of the rate of postage as it existed previous to the establishment of the United States packets, will be founded upon principles of perfect reciprocity.

The services demanded for the maintenance of such a communication between the two countries, are a conveyance of the correspondence within their territories by their internal posts, and its transmission by means of packets across the Atlantic; the expenses of the first description of service, applying equally to both countries, upon all the letters transmitted, the cost of the latter falling upon that country alone by which the packet conveyance has been furnished.

Entertaining these views upon the subject, her Majesty's government proposes:

1st. That there shall be levied, as the amount of postage on every letter originating in Great Britain addressed to the United States, and *vice versa*, a combined rate of one shilling and *four* pence for each single letter not exceeding half an ounce, and so on in proportion, according to the scale in operation in Great Britain, of which sum, *four* pence shall represent the inland, and one shilling the packet rate of postage.

2d. That the payment of this combined rate shall be optional in either country.

3d. That each country shall retain that portion of the combined rate, representing the inland postage, which it shall collect, whether on *paid* or *unpaid* letters, but that with respect to the portion representing the packet postage, it shall belong to that country by which the packet conveying the letter has been furnished.

4th. That each country shall account to the other, at the rate of one shilling the half ounce, and so on in proportion, &c., for such paid or unpaid letters transmitted between the two countries, the postage upon which shall not be collected by the country furnishing the packet.

5th. That the rate of transit postage, to be paid upon letters transmitted through either country, shall be the same as that levied

upon international letters, and shall be regulated by the same principles as those laid down for that class of correspondence; but that in addition to such international rate there shall be levied the rate of foreign or colonial postage, payable by the subjects of the country through which the transit correspondence passes on letters addressed to similar destinations. This foreign or colonial rate, however, is to be calculated from or to the port of arrival or departure of the foreign or colonial packet.

6th. That each country shall grant to the other the conveyance of closed mails through its territories in Europe or America. The rate of postage to be charged on such correspondence shall be the same as that levied on ordinary transit letters, except that it shall be taken by the net weight, and by the ounce; the ounce to be charged as two single rates in addition to twenty-five per cent. on the amount of postage, to compensate the loss that would otherwise be sustained by this mode of computation.

7th. That optional payment of postage shall be established on letters between the United States and British North America; the United States to take the existing rates of five and ten cents, according to distance, and two rates to be fixed upon in British North America, so calculated as to be within, on the average, the present rates in those provinces.

Should the United States avail itself of the privilege of sending its closed mails through the British North American provinces, the amount of transit postage to be paid shall be calculated on these rates, according to distance, and also on the principle as to weight, &c., laid down for closed mails, in the preceding paragraph. This arrangement not to be affected by the post office department in the North American provinces being placed under colonial management.

Note.—The existing rates of postage in the United States are 5 cents and 10 cents, according to whether the distance to which the letter is conveyed is over or under three hundred miles.

Assuming the cent to be equivalent in amount to one-half penny, the average of these two rates is $3\frac{3}{4}d$, but four-pence has been taken in this memorandum as the average rate, for the sake of avoiding fractions.

Lord Clanricarde to Mr. Bancroft.

Carleton Terrace, *October* 4, 1847.

Dear Sir: I am going out of town this afternoon, for the week. I shall return on Saturday, and the chancellor of the exchequer will come to London on Monday to remain.

I do not suppose you will desire to see me before that time; but if such should be the case, I will come up for a few hours, any day, without inconvenience.

The more you consider the propositions I have had the honor to

submit to you, the more I think you will be inclined to approve them; and if we agree upon the main basis of the sea rate to be paid to the packet which may perform the service, and the inland rate to be divided equally between the two countries, and to be an uniform rate, I have no doubt the details of our convention may be easily and satisfactorily arranged.

I remain, my dear sir, your very faithful servant,

CLANRICARDE.

Mr. Bancroft to Lord Clanricarde.

OCTOBER 5, 1847.

MY DEAR LORD: Agreeably to my promise, I have given instant attention to your "project." Mr. Hobbie, at my instance, came immediately to London, and we spent yesterday in examining the American laws, and discussing your propositions. Your note of the 4th came just as I was writing; we were ready to meet your lordship for some definite arrangement. The chancellor of the exchequer is already in town, will be here all this week, is ready to act upon the subject at once, and thinks we might settle every thing in a few hours. I should like to finish my part of the business this week. Mr. Hobbie, the American First Assistant Postmaster General, came to England on this business in July last, and is expected to return home about the 20th of this month. We shall send you our reply to your project to-morrow, and can we not meet with the chancellor, if necessary, on Thursday, and at a long session finish most of the preliminary matter?

The proposition in your lordship's paper, and that in the note of yesterday, each differs from the one made on Wednesday. On that day you proposed one-third uniform rate; one shilling for the party performing the sea conveyance, the three pence for the other. This might form the basis of our arrangement, if also applied to transit postage, which the "project" makes too high for British interests, as well as for our convenience. We shall go to the utmost verge in favor of uniform postage, anticipating a similar spirit of accommodation.

I remain, my dear lord, yours, very faithfully,

GEORGE BANCROFT.

[Left at Downing street, Wednesday, October 6, 1847.]

Reply to the British project of a postal convention.

The American government, in its postal arrangement with her Majesty's government, agrees in desiring the greatest facilities for correspondence between the two countries, seeks to diminish, rather

than increase, the present rates of postage, and offers and accepts "principles of perfect reciprocity" as the basis of an arrangement.

The service requires inland carriage in America; sea conveyance and inland carriage in the British isles. The sea conveyance is the same for both. The inland carriage differs in distance; and from difference in density in population, in cost, and in productiveness. The distance from Liverpool to the remotest point in the British isles is but a few hundred miles. From Boston to Mobile, New Orleans, Galveston and Austin, is further by the mail routes than from London to Constantinople, Smyrna and Cairo. Many post offices in the United States are as far asunder as the whole breadth of the Atlantic. A penny postage in England yields a revenue. A postage in America of five cents and ten cents, leaves the post office still a heavy burthen on the treasury. Her Majesty's government is fully aware of these things; it has introduced the penny postage in Great Britain but not in Canada.

Reply to the first proposition.

The simplest reciprocity arrangement is one uniform sea rate, with option of pre-payment, and each nation to regulate, to collect and to appropriate its own inland postage, with the condition that the rates shall be equal for the letters brought by the respective packets of the two nations. This is strictly in conformity with the reciprocity treaty of 1815.

Or, the American government will accept Lord Clanricarde's proposition, made on Wednesday, September 29th, to Mr. Bancroft, of one uniform rate of 1*s.* 3*d* , with option of pre-payment; the shilling to go to the nation which carries the letter by sea, the three pence to the other, provided this uniform rate is extended to transit correspondence, as hereinafter proposed.

Or, provided this uniform rate is extended to transit correspondence, as hereinafter proposed, the American government will accept three pence as the American inland rate, nine pence as the sea rate, and three pence as the English inland rate, and divide the inland rates equally. The proposition that the letter of a merchant in New Orleans should be sent from New Orleans to Boston, and thence to London, by the Cunard line, for 1*s.* 3*d.*, and the United States to have of that sum but $1\frac{1}{2}d.$ is not approved of.

On the other hand, $1\frac{1}{2}d.$ is more than enough for sending a letter from Glasgow to Southampton. One shilling is enough to remunerate the nation which carries the letter by sea, for whatever it may have to do in the way of receiving or delivering it on land.

It is further to be remarked that two cents are a very little less than a penny; that if America collects at two cents, the penny in England, in sterling money, England should account to America at 484 cents the pound sterling, and America to England at 480 cents the pound sterling; one shilling being $24\frac{1}{5}$ cents, and a pound being not 480, but 484 cents.

Reply to the second proposition.

It is agreed that payment of this combined rate shall be optional in either country.

Reply to the third proposition.

The inland postage, like the sea postage, should be mutually accounted for, and not depend on the accident of collection. For further answer on this point, see reply to first proposition.

Reply to the fourth proposition.

It is agreed that the uniform rate of postage shall be charged on the letter, according to the scale observed in England. But to account, one government to the other, by weight, is deemed objectionable, for the reason that that mode will not give a full and exact account of the postages collected, inasmuch as letters generally fall short of the maximum weight at which they are rated, and more postages are collected than the aggregate weight would indicate. It is, therefore, proposed to render the account according to the number of letters, counting a double letter as two, and so on; that is according to the actual number of postages.

Reply to the fifth proposition.

The uniform rate of one shilling and three pence should cover the transit charge on letters for foreign countries or colonies, and no further charge should be made on such letters, except that proportion of the foreign charges which goes to the foreign government.

Reply to the sixth proposition.

This proposition as to closed mails is agreed to, provided the transit rate is limited, as above suggested, to three pence, excluding all the foreign postage excepting that proportion of it which goes to the foreign government, and which the United States may have the liberty to regulate with that government.

Reply to the seventh proposition.

The proposition for optional payment between America and British North America is agreed to, on condition that the two rates of postage to be adopted for British North America shall not exceed those of the United States in amount, in proportion to distance.

Lord Clanricarde to Mr. Bancroft.

October 7, 1847.

Dear Sir: I have but just received your letter, together with one from the chancellor of the exchequer.

I think we had better fix two o'clock on Saturday to meet in Downing street.

I am sorry I did not clearly explain the propositions contained in the paper I sent to you, and which was before me during our conversation.

The only difference I can see between us is, that in your letter you say: "the 1*s.* for the party performing the sea conveyance, the 3*d.* to the *other*;" meaning, I presume, other *party*. What I am authorized to propose, and what I hoped I had stated clearly was, 1*s.* sea rate; and 3*d.*, inland or other *rate*—the sea rate to go to the packet which actually conveys the letter, the inland to be divided; which division I proposed to effect by each country retaining the inland rates it received. This, I think, is perfect reciprocity and uniform rate.

I remain, my dear sir, truly yours,

CLANRICARDE.

Mr. Bancroft to Lord Clanricarde.

October 13, 1847.

The American minister presents his compliments to her Majesty's postmaster general, and being engaged in preparing a protest against the post office order No. 9, of June last, begs leave to be precisely informed what sum is exacted on each letter of half ounce or less, brought by the United States mail steamer Washington, and delivered by her Majesty's packets at Havre.

Lord Clanricarde to Mr. Bancroft.

October 14, 1847.

The postmaster general presents his compliments to the American minister, and, in reply to Mr. Bancroft's note of yesterday, has the honor to inform him that the charge upon letters brought from America by the mail packet "Washington," and transmitted to France, is not levied letter by letter, but by weight, en masse. The sum paid to the British post office is regulated by the postal convention of 1843, and fixed at four francs per ounce, net weight. Her Majesty has no packets to Havre.

Mr. Bancroft to Lord Clanricarde.

October 18, 1847.

My Dear Lord: We have, on our side, sufficiently considered your lordship's suggestions made on Monday last, and if you are prepared to enter on the adjustment of the transit rates, we are ready to act definitively on the whole subject. If that be agreeable to you, we propose to wait upon you on Tuesday, at any hour you may name, or on any other early day on which you may be disposed to resume our efforts at a satisfactory arrangement.

Very faithfully yours,

GEORGE BANCROFT.

Lord Clanricarde to Mr Bancroft.

General Post Office, *October* 22, 1847.

Dear Sir: I find it would be impossible to make an official communication upon the progress of our negotiation, in due form, and through the foreign office, in time for you to send it home by the "Washington." But I have the honor to enclose a memorandum similar to that which I have already given you, but which states, more exactly, the views that the chancellor of the exchequer and I entertain, and which may be said to represent those of our government, upon the points upon which I hope I may consider we are agreed, and upon those which remain for discussion.

I remain, &c.

CLANRICARDE.

[Enclosure.]

Her Majesty's government proposes to negotiate a postal convention with the United States which, at the same time that it will afford to the inhabitants of the two countries the greatest facilities consistent with the maintenance of the rate of postage, as it existed previous to the establishment of the United States packets, will be founded upon principles of perfect reciprocity.

The service demanded for the maintenance of such a communication between the two countries are a conveyance of the correspondence within their territories, by their internal posts, and its transmission by means of packets across the Atlantic; the expenses of the first description of service applying equally to both countries upon all the letters transmitted; the cost of the latter falling upon that country alone by which the packet conveyance has been furnished.

Entertaining these views upon the subject, her Majesty's government proposes:

1st. That there shall be levied, as the amount of postage, on every letter originating in Great Britain addressed to the United States, and vice versa, a combined rate of one shilling and two pence. Two pence inland rate to be paid to each country, and ten pence sea rate to that country whose packet may carry the letters, upon all letters not exceeding in weight half an ounce.

2d. That the payment of this combined rate shall be optional in either country.

3d. That each country shall retain that portion of the combined rate representing the inland postage which it shall collect, whether on *paid or unpaid letters;* but that, with respect to the portion representing the packet postage, it shall belong to that country by which the packet conveying the letter has been furnished.

4th. That each country shall account to the other at the rate of one shilling the half ounce, and so on in proportion, &c., for such paid or unpaid letters transmitted between the two countries, the postage upon which shall not be collected by the country furnishing the packet.

5th. The above mentioned rate to cover all postage chargeable upon international letters to any post office within either country, and that any further rate, imposed for packet service for the transport of a letter beyond the country to a foreign or colonial port, shall not exceed that charged upon letters of the subjects of either country.

6th. That each country shall grant to the other the conveyance of closed mails through its territories in Europe or America. The rate of postage to be charged on such correspondence shall be the same as that levied on ordinary transit letters, except that it shall be taken by the net weight and by the ounce; the ounce to be charged as two single rates, in addition to 25 per cent. on the amount of postage, to compensate the loss that would otherwise be sustained by this mode of computation.

7th. That optional payment of postage shall be established on letters between the United States and British North America, upon rates to be agreed upon; this arrangement, not to be affected by the Post Office Department in the North American provinces, being placed under colonial management.

Mr. Bancroft to Lord Clanricarde.

October 23, 1847.

My Dear Lord: I have received your lordship's note of the 22d, and its enclosure.

I regret that you have put it in my power to send home, by the Washington to-morrow, nothing more than a memorandum, instead of a postal convention, duly completed.

I am ready at any moment to sign, and put into immediate operation, a convention on general terms of entire reciprocity, as ex-

pressed in the commercial convention of 1815, leaving each country to regulate respectively its inland postage and transit rates, but applying uniform rates to packet ships and letters of both countries.

And I am also ready, whenever it may suit your lordship's pleasure, to give continuous attention to the questions of transit and other rates, if the mode of adjustment by fixed rates, jointly agreed upon, is preferred by your lordship.

I have the honor, &c.,

GEORGE BANCROFT.

Mr. Bancroft to Lord Palmerston.

United States Legation,
90 *Eaton Square*, *October* 22, 1847.

The undersigned, envoy extraordinary and minister plenipotentiary of the United States of America, had the honor, on the 12th of July last, and, more fully on the 10th of August last, to make overtures to Viscount Palmerston, her Majesty's principal secretary of state for foreign affairs, for a postal arrangement between the United States and the United Kingdom.

The undersigned has this day received, directly from her Majesty's postmaster general, a memorandum upon the subject to be communicated to his government. Pending the negotiation, it is right that the *status* of the two parties should be equal. Yet the undersigned is apprised that the order, No. 9, issued by the general post office in June, 1847, by which a discriminating double postage is levied upon letters conveyed in American mail packets from the United States to the United Kingdom, and from the United Kingdom to the United States, continues to be enforced .

The free intercourse by letters between more than fifty millions of people, whose mother tongue is the English, and of whom nearly one-half dwell on the western side of the Atlantic, is of such moment to general commerce, international friendship, private affection, and to the condition and prospects of the cultivated world, that even a temporary restriction of that freedom may well demand the serious attention of all who desire to cherish relations of amity between kindred nations.

It is, therefore, with deep regret, that the undersigned feels himself compelled to protest against the post office order in question.

I. As the act of a department of her Majesty's government, without the warrant of a British statute.

It is true that Lord Palmerston, in his note of the 27th August, following a letter which he had received from that department, insists that "the act of the 3d and 4th Victoria expressly declares, that all letters not weighing more than half an ounce, which shall be transmitted by the post between the United Kingdom and the United States of North America, shall be chargeable with an uniform rate of one shilling; and the 71st section of the same act provides, that the expression by the post shall be understood as in-

cluding transmission of post letters by packet boats." But the declarations of law, to which Lord Palmerston refers, evidently relate to the British packet service, and do but regulate the duties of British postage. Great Britain might as well, by act of parliament, regulate the duties of postage within the United States, as regulate, by act of parliament, the sea rates chargeable for conveyance in American packet boats upon the great and common highway of the nations.

And if the schedule, referred to in the act above mentioned, is to be applied to American packet boats, the post office order in question contravenes the act; for it levies a second postage when one has already been paid; thus making the rate charged between the United States and the United Kingdom two shillings, for what the act referred to declares shall be but one uniform rate of one shilling.

Or, did the British legislature seriously intend, by law, to transfer exclusively to its own exchequer the whole return for the packet service of foreign nations sending packets to her ports? The supposition that parliament can have so intended is not to be entertained; for that intention would have been inconsistent with equity and with international rights. In confirmation of the opinion that such was not the intention of the legislature, the undersigned appeals confidently to Lord Palmerston himself, who was at that time one of its members, and to his colleagues of that day, in the ministry, and in parliament.

II. But, even if the letter of the act of 3d and 4th Victoria, cap. 96, should seem to authorize the imposition of a discriminating double postage, the undersigned would still protest against the post office order in question, as of a most unfriendly character, contrary to those principles of perfect reciprocity which should govern the postal arrangements between the two countries.

Lord Palmerston is well aware that the act alluded to is not mandatory, but that a discretion rests with the lords of the treasury, or any three of them, with regard to its application. The post office order, to which the undersigned has already called the attention of her Majesty's government, assumes, therefore, undeniably the character of an executive act not required by law.

The degree of unfriendliness that has been manifested will appear from comparing the rates charged on the American mails brought in the American packet to Southampton, and forwarded from Southampton to Havre, with those which the British government asked, and accepted, from the American government, for the conveyance from Boston to St. Johns, in Canada, of their closed mails brought in British packets to Boston. A special express conveyance, for the sole purpose of transporting that mail, was established by the American government; and nothing more than a rate of two pence half-penny for the single letter of half an ounce, or about sixpence the ounce, net weight, was demanded, for a mail thus exclusively instituted for that service; and the British post office, for conveying the American closed mails from Southampton to the French shore, a distance less than half as great as the distance from Boston to St. Johns, with no unusual speed, and in the

least expensive manner, exacts four francs, or, nearly seven fold the sum paid to America for more than twice the service.

The undersigned further protests against the post office order in question, not only as illegal and unfriendly, but also as unprecedented. It is true, Lord Palmerston explains "that the United States is not the only country to which the above mentioned act has been so applied, but that on the contrary, the regulation by which packet postage is charged upon letters and newspapers conveyed by foreign packets, has been invariably acted upon in regard to letters conveyed by the mail packets of all foreign countries." Now, there are but two nations, besides the United States, which convey letters to this island by their own mail packets, viz: France, and Belgium. "All foreign countries," referred to by Lord Palmerston, can, therefore, be only France, Belgium, and America. Has "the above mentioned act" ever been "*so applied*" to the mail packets of France? When, and where, was it "so applied?" When, and where, was double postage levied on a French mail packet? The undersigned has not, by diligent inquiry, been able to discover that the above mentioned rate was ever "so applied" to the mail packets of France.

Or, is it to Belgium that the above mentioned act was "so applied?" It may be that once, on a line of mail packets of Belgium, what Lord Palmerston calls the ordinary rates of ship letter postage, may have been levied through mistake, because the boats were not taken to be mail packets; but if so, the error committed was readily acknowledged and rectified. But Lord Palmerston insists "that the rates of packet postage, and not the ordinary rates of ship letter postage," are chargeable upon letters conveyed by the American government packets, under the act above mentioned; and Lord Palmerston proceeds to say, that "the last occasion on which this regulation was so applied happened in 1844, when the Belgian government, having established packets to run twice a week between Dover and Ostend, letters conveyed by those packets were ordered to be charged with precisely the same rates of postage which are chargeable upon letters conveyed by British mail packets."

This statement is made by Lord Palmerston with great precision; but the undersigned, in reply to his inquiries in respect to it, is informed, that "the Belgian packet boats did not begin to ply between Ostend and Dover till the month of March, *eighteen hundred and forty-six*, and that no difference has ever arisen between the two countries in reference to letters transported by these packet boats."

Besides, her Majesty's postmaster general has himself informed the undersigned that the post office order in question is a novel application of the rates established eight years since. And the undersigned begs Lord Palmerston to believe that, as her Majesty's government have never imposed double postage to the injury of any nation but the United States, so the post office order in question stands in striking contrast with the welcome given to American letters from American packet boats by other nations of Europe.

IV. The undersigned further protests against the order in question as inconsistent with the spirit of the convention of 3d July, 1815, "to regulate the commerce between the territories of the United States and of his Britannic Majesty," which convention provides, that "no higher or other duties or charges shall be imposed * * * * in the ports of any of his Britannic Majesty's territories in Europe on the vessels of the United States, than shall be payable in the same ports on British vessels;" and further, that "the citizens of the United States * * * * shall pay no higher or other duties or charges on the importation or exportation of the cargoes of the said vessels, than shall be payable on the same articles when imported or exported in the vessels of the most favored European nations."

The undersigned is here constrained to ask if the few shillings which have been thus far exacted, and which continue to be exacted by the British post office, as sea rates upon letters which it did bring over sea, are a compensation for the creation of even temporary impediments in the way of commercial, social, and scientific correspondence, between nations speaking the same language, and bound to amity by the highest considerations of regard for civil and commercial freedom.

The undersigned, notwithstanding his former notes to Lord Palmerston on this subject have failed to obtain redress, could not witness the continued exaction of double postage on letters conveyed by American steamers, without entering his protest. Meantime he is ever ready to contribute his efforts towards completing, without delay, with her Majesty's government, a postal arrangement which shall place the mail service of the two countries on the footing of perfect reciprocity.

The undersigned avails himself, &c.

GEORGE BANCROFT.

Lord Palmerston to Mr. Bancroft.

FOREIGN OFFICE, *December* 21, 1847.

The undersigned, her Majesty's principal secretary of state for foreign affairs, has the honor to inform Mr. Bancroft, envoy extraordinary and minister plenipotentiary from the United States of America at this court, that her Majesty's government have had under their consideration Mr. Bancroft's note of the 22d of October last, renewing his representations against the rate of postage charged upon letters conveyed to the United Kingdom by the American mail packets; and the undersigned, having communicated with the department of the post office, begs leave to make the following observations upon Mr. Bancroft's note.

In the first place, the undersigned has to observe, that Mr. Bancroft designates the rates levied by the British post office upon letters conveyed in the American mail packets to and from Great Britain, as a "discriminating double postage." But the undersigned

has been informed by the postmaster general that, in point of fact, the postage in question is levied not as a discriminating duty, but in accordance with the plain enactment of the statute, as the undersigned has already explained in his note to Mr. Bancroft of the 27th of August last; which statute would be equally applicable to correspondence conveyed under similar circumstances by the packets of other countries, except in those cases which have been specially provided for by treaty.

Mr. Bancroft states that unfriendliness towards the United States has been shown by the charge of postage of which he complains, and that this will appear, if the rates of postage which are charged on the mails brought in the American packets to Southampton, and forwarded from thence to Havre, are compared with the rates of postage which her Majesty's government asked and accepted from the United States government for conveying from Boston to St. Johns, in Canada, the closed mails brought in British packets to Boston. But upon this the undersigned must beg to state that the rate of postage to be paid by Great Britain for the conveyance of British letters through the United States to Canada, was made the subject of a previous negotiation between the post offices of the two countries, and that this transit rate was fixed without any regard to the inland rates of postage charged in the United States; the Postmaster General of the United States having expressly declared that the terms which he demanded were based upon the agreement which had been made between Great Britain and France for the conveyance of the Indian mails through the French territory; and it appears to the undersigned that the misconception which has arisen in regard to the supposed unfriendliness of the act of the British post office, to which Mr. Bancroft's note refers, might have been prevented, if the Postmaster General of the United States, instead of taking for granted that no postage would be levied in the United Kingdom upon the correspondence conveyed by the steam packet "Washington," had taken measures to settle that matter by coming to a previous understanding with the British post office.

And with regard to the rates of postage which are charged for the conveyance from Southampton to Havre, of that portion of the mails brought by the "Washington" which is destined for France, the undersigned has to inform Mr. Bancroft that those rates were not recently imposed for the first time, but were fixed some years ago by a convention between the British and French post offices; and therefore the amount of those rates cannot be adduced as evidence of an unfriendly spirit on the part of Great Britain towards the United States. The authorities of the British post office, however, entirely disclaim having been actuated by any such spirit; and they say that if the British post office has hesitated to alter, at once, a law which has afforded great facilities to, and has led to a vast increase of, the correspondence between the two countries, it was from no unfriendly feeling towards the United States, but from considerations connected with the administration of the British Post Office Department.

Mr. Bancroft compares the post office arrangements, subsisting between Great Britain and France, and between Great Britain and Belgium, with the post office arrangements of Great Britain in regard to the United States; but the undersigned begs to observe upon this, that the position of the British post office in regard to France and Belgium is by no means similar to its position in regard to the United States, inasmuch, as France and Belgium bear an equal share with Great Britain in providing packets for the post office service, and have entered into agreements with the British post office as to the rates of postage to be charged; whereas Great Britain has long borne singly the heavy cost of the packet service between Great Britain and the United States, while the advantages derived from that service have been shared equally by the people of both countries.

The undersigned observes that Mr. Bancroft has expressed doubts of the accuracy of the statement contained in the note from the undersigned of the 27th of August, to the effect, that the regulation by which packet postage is charged upon letters and newspapers conveyed to England by the mail packets of foreign countries, has not been now applied for the first time in the case of the letters and newspapers conveyed by the United States' packets, but that, on the contrary, such a charge was made in regard to the correspondence brought into, or despatched from, the United Kingdom, by packet boats established by the Belgian government to run twice a week between Ostend and Dover.

With regard to this matter, Her Majesty's Postmaster General has informed the undersigned, that in August, 1844, the Belgian government entered into a contract with the southeastern railway company, to run their vessels between Dover and Ostend twice a week, for the purpose of carrying additional mails between England and Belgium, and those vessels being thus, to all intents and purposes, "Belgian packet boats," all letters brought by them became legally liable to the same packet rates of postage as letters conveyed by the regular British packets; and the letters brought by those Belgian packet boats were charged accordingly.

But another instance, in which the rates of British packet postage were charged in England upon the correspondence of a foreign country, occurred in the case of the packet communication between Great Britain and the kingdom of Sweden. The expense of that communication was borne jointly by the two countries, but the packet vessels were provided by Sweden; and, nevertheless, the correspondence conveyed by those vessels was charged in this country with full British packet rates of postage.

Again, in the present packet communication between Great Britain and France, each country employs its own packets for the conveyance of its own mails; but the British post office has always levied the same amount of postage upon the letters brought by the French packets as upon those conveyed by its own vessels.

The undersigned trusts that these instances will suffice to convince Mr. Bancroft that the regulation, under which the letters brought to the United Kingdom by the American contract packets have

been charged with postage, has not been applied to those letters invidiously, nor in an unfriendly spirit, but that it has been invariably acted upon with respect to correspondence transmitted to the United Kingdom by the mail packets of other countries.

The undersigned, in conclusion, has the honor to state to Mr. Bancroft, that her Majesty's government is ready to negotiate a new post office treaty with the United States, upon a liberal basis, with a view to the mutual advantage of both countries, and for the promotion of the general interests of international and commercial intercourse; but her Majesty's government cannot undertake to recommend that the existing law respecting packet postage should be altered, until her Majesty's government shall have maturely considered the various points which the proposed treaty should embrace, nor until Great Britain shall have obtained, by treaty, some advantages, in return for the sacrifices which she is prepared to make by the modification of those existing laws.

The undersigned has the honor, &c.,

PALMERSTON.

GEORGE BANCROFT, Esq., *&c., &c.*

Mr. Bancroft to Lord Clanricarde.

3 o'CLOCK, MONDAY, *February* 7.

Mr. Bancroft has the honor to enclose for the Marquis of Clanricarde the memorandum of which his lordship wished a copy.

Will Lord Clanricarde do Mr. Bancroft the favor to send him a complete copy of the postal convention with France, and the several supplementary for its modification or execution? Mr. Bancroft sent to Washington the copy with which Lord Clanricarde had already furnished him.

[Enclosed.]

Extract of Mr. Johnson's letter to Mr. Bancroft, dated January 12, 1848.

* * If these terms are acceded to, then the United States would undertake to transport all letters, &c., from the kingdom of Great Britain or its dependencies, from the office in which they are deposited to their destination, or to the office within the United States nearest the place of destination, upon the same terms and conditions, and with the same speed, that letters from the citizens of the United States are now or hereafter may be taken between the same places; and it would be expected that the British government would likewise transport in their mails letters, &c., from the citizens of the United States or Territories, which were so deposited in any of their offices, to their place of destination, upon the same

terms and conditions, and with the same speed, that letters, &c., from her Majesty's subjects are now or hereafter may be transported in the British mails between the same places.

* * * * * * * *

Lord Clanricarde to Mr. Bancroft.

G. P. O., *February* 10, 1848.

Dear sir: I have considered, and have conferred with the chancellor of the exchequer upon the counter propositions transmitted to you by the Postmaster General of the United States, in reply to those we had the honor to submit to you, and particularly upon that which is referred to in the extract from Mr. Cave Johnson's letter which you have been so good as to send me.

To that proposition, viz: that letters sent from one country should be treated, upon their arrival in the other, upon precisely the same terms as the inland letters of the latter country, we cannot agree. We should thereby gain, upon making the alteration in our law which you desire, nothing for the advantage of the commercial world, or the public of the two countries.

Great Britain established regular and steam packets for the correspondence across the Atlantic, at considerable risk and at great expense. In 1839 we lowered the rates of postage between England and America, voluntarily; and the law you wish to change was passed with the approbation of the American, quite as much as of the British public. We are ready to change that law, in order to gain increased facilities for the correspondence of the two countries. But we think it essential, in making any change, to secure for the public optional pre-payment, and a reduced and uniform rate of postage.

As the proposition to which I refer is the most important of any, I need not now advert to the others you mentioned to me.

The chancellor of the exchequer and myself had hoped that the mode by which we proposed to attain the objects to which I have alluded, would have been as well received at Washington as we flattered ourselves it was by you; and that we might easily have agreed upon the remaining points for a convention, which in such case might have been concluded without further delay than that which official forms would have required.

But as there appears to be a reluctance upon the part of the government of the United States to accept our propositions, it will be necessary for me to place them upon record, by transmitting them in the usual form through the treasury to the foreign office. And I cannot abandon the hope that, upon reconsideration, Mr. Cave Johnson will advise the acceptance of a proposal which is calculated to confer upon the commercial world on both sides of the Atlantic great and permanent advantages.

I remain, &c.,

CLANRICARDE.

Hon. George Bancroft, *&c., &c.*

Mr. Bancroft to Lord Clanricarde.

90 Eaton Square, *February* 11, 1848.

My lord: The interview to which your lordship invited me on Monday last, did not prepare me for the abrupt termination of our direct negotiation, as announced to me in your note which I received late last night, and in which your lordship refuses the principle of reciprocity as the basis of a postal convention with the United States.

You decline the proposition that letters sent from one country should be treated, upon their arrival in the other, upon precisely the same terms as the inland letters of the latter country, and at the same time you insist on maintaining your own present high rates of postage on transit letters taken across the channel. That is to say, you decline a postal arrangement with the United States, unless where British postage is low, you may raise it on American correspondence, and where British postage is very high, you may retain it as it is; and you further claim that British correspondence shall be carried from Boston to Austin, or Jefferson city, or Astoria, from one end of a continent to the other, at the same rate at which you carry letters through the limited and densely peopled regions of Great Britain and Ireland.

This creates surprise. Still more am I surprised at your lordship's assigning as a reason for your refusal to agree to Mr. Johnson's proposition, that by acceding to it nothing would be gained for the advantage of the commercial world. Now, in point of fact, Mr. Johnson's proposition, as conveyed by me to your lordship, doubles the opportunities of correspondence, and reduces the rate of postage twenty per cent., or even thirty-three and one-third per cent. At the same time it offers no insurmountable obstacle to the system of optional pre-payment.

I will add, that my desire to promote the comfort and interest of the commercial world and the public of the two countries, is the leading, not to say the sole motive of my urging this negotiation to an immediate settlement. The interests of the American post office revenue I regard as subordinate.

You allude to the fact that Great Britain was the first to establish regular packets, as though that circumstance should give Great Britain an advantage in the negotiation. The British packet service between America and Great Britain is as old as the importance of the British American colonies. It goes far back into the last century, and perhaps farther, and used to be a very heavy burthen on the British treasury. A few years ago you improved the service and defrayed the expenses of it out of the United States correspondence, of which the United States permitted you to be the sole carriers. We now intend to be joint carriers. By the custom of nations, which forms international law, by the municipal laws of England and of the United States, and by the Constitution of the United States, the postal service is a function of govern-

ment. Between independent nations it can have no foundation but reciprocity.

You are quite right as to my views, when you refer to my desire to establish a reduced and uniform rate of postage between America and Great Britain, coupled, you will keep in mind, with such a reduction of the transit rates of postage as should make England the channel of communication with the European continent. From Boston to St. Johns, from New York to the Canadian line, is as far as from Southampton to Ostend, or from Liverpool to Havre or Boulogne. I endeavored with all the earnestness in my power to persuade you to make England the great medium of communication between America and the European continent. I pointed out to you a double advantage to Great Britain from adopting such a course: 1st. To English trade; for if England is the regular channel through which American correspondence with the continent passes, more of it, and consequently more of American commerce will remain in England; and, 2d. The British post office revenue, for it is plain that to share in carrying the correspondence of America to the European continent would largely increase that revenue.

These arguments, and the proposition founded on them, on my part, of a reduced and uniform rate of postage, you rejected. I abandon, therefore, as as I told you on Monday, all attempts to induce you to reduce your transit rates, and I leave the subject to your own laws and your own views of your own interest. In like manner I invite you to leave the American government to fix its own inland rates, according to the nature of its widely extended, thinly peopled country, with its roads new or unfinished, or primitive, and sometimes all but impassable; with its inland seas which are several times wider than the British Channel; with its rivers, which are mail routes, and which, from source to mouth, are longer than the distance from Liverpool to Boston. We have fixed those inland rates on liberal terms, and are now preparing to reduce them. Let the reduction be left to the judgment and liberality of the American people. Do you, also, on your part, establish your own inland rates, according to the system which perfect roads and a limited and every where densely peopled territory incline you to establish.

To the postal communication between England and America there are three parts: the inland British service, the inland American service, and the sea service. The service on the sea is identically the same for both parties; the respective inland service is widely different.

I repeat to your lordship this offer:

Let Great Britain establish its own inland rates and transit rates as it will, making them the same for correspondence by British or American packets. Let America establish its own inland rates and transit rates as it will, making them the same for correspondence by American or British packets. Let there be one uniform sea rate of seven pence, or any sum you may prefer, not much exceeding seven pence, with option of pre-payment.

As you name the chancellor of the exchequer in your note, be

good enough to acquaint him with this my reply, which I intend as official. There is no need of referring this subject back again to the United States. My powers are full, and if you please, I shall myself be glad to receive and to consider your reply.

I remain, &c.,

GEORGE BANCROFT.

The Marquis of Clanricarde, &c., &c.

Lord Clanricarde to Mr. Bancroft.

G. P. O., *February* 14, 1848.

Dear Sir: It will give the chancellor of the exchequer and myself sincere regret if the negotiations between her Majesty's government and that of the United States should terminate without the conclusion of a convention beneficial to the American and British people. And it is only because we have been much disappointed in finding, by your late proposition, that we had really made no progress by our personal communications, that I have proposed to you to revert to the more formal and generally more tedious course of regular official routine.

The chancellor of the exchequer and myself believed that, after our various interviews and discussions, we had come to an agreement with you upon the principal points to be decided. Your letter to me, of the 18th of last October, says: "We have on our side sufficiently considered your lordship's suggestions, made on Monday last, and if you are prepared to enter on the adjustment of the transit routes, we are ready to act definitively upon the whole subject." And on the 23d of the same month, you say: "I regret that you have put it in my power to send home by the Washington to-morrow, nothing more than a memorandum, instead of a postal convention." We therefore flattered ourselves that the "suggestions" alluded to have been as well approved upon further consideration, as they had been received by you after our discussions; that if the memorandum in which they were recorded had been converted into a convention, you would have been ready to sign it, and that the only delay necessary for the perfecting a convention containing those propositions, was that which we required for the consideration of the transit rates, and of the postage upon correspondence between the United States and the British North American provinces.

But in our late interview, and in the letter I had the honor to receive from you on Friday evening, you entirely set aside those propositions, and you revert to the demand you made last summer, namely: that we should alter our existing law, and should levy no other rate than our ordinary inland postage upon letters arriving in American packets, without securing either reduction or uniformity in the entire charge to be made upon the correspondence between the two countries.

To that demand the chancellor of the exchequer and I cannot advise her Majesty's government to accede. We ask for a uniform

rate, of which the inland postage shall be equally divided between the two countries, and the sea rate shall be paid, to whichever country the packet in which the letters may be conveyed may belong; and we propose to reduce the rates as far as in our opinion the nature of the service to be performed will allow. By our plan, a person might put a letter into any post office in either country, and might be certain that it would be forwarded to whatever post office in the other country it might be directed, pre-paid, or the postage paid on delivery, at his option. In such a proposal, I can see no "refusal of the basis of reciprocity."

We are anxious, likewise, to establish perfect reciprocity in regard to closed mails and the transit rates, and rates between the United States and our North American provinces. If you are now disposed to admit, as the basis of the arrangement, those proposals which the chancellor of the exchequer and I understand to have been accepted by you at the commencement of the winter, we shall be happy to proceed with the negotiation from that point.

I remain, &c.,

CLANRICARDE.

The Hon. Geo. Bancroft, *&c., &c.*

Mr. Bancroft to Lord Clanricarde.

90 Eaton Square, *February* 15, 1848.

My Dear Lord: Late last night I received your favor of the 14th. I will begin my reply by quoting an extract from a despatch I wrote home immediately after our interview. "I met the postmaster general at his own request and by his own appointment on Monday. I began the discussion with adverting to the sea rate of postage, which I invited him to fix at seven pence or eight pence the letter of a half ounce, or less. Ten pence he declared to be the lowest sea rate he could agree to, and, considering the cost of the service, he estimated that charge moderate. As to the inland rates, to the proposition to let each country arrange them for itself, * * * he said the British government had never made a convention on that basis, but he saw no reason why it should not. * * * * * * * * * The interview, which was an hour long, was every way agreeable. Lord Clanricarde was frank and fair in his statements; professed his desire to settle the convention without seeking any advantage, and without delay; and he gave due weight to all suggestions made by me, or derived from the paper of the Postmaster General." I hope, my lord, I have done no injustice to your views in this report of them.

To a part of your lordship's note you will find a full reply, not more in my note of last Friday, than in the preamble to the propositions which I sent you on the sixth of October last.

Mr. Hobbie and I, during his stay in London, in October, gave up our whole time to the consideration of our proposed postal convention. We were prepared to act definitively, and were greatly disappointed that you uniformly avoided arranging the transit rates

through England. When we met you on Monday, the 11th of October, you declared yourself unprepared to discuss the transit postage. On Tuesday, the 19th, you avowed yourself still unable to meet our views by a proposition. Perceiving the post office order of June was to be kept in force indefinitely, I made, on the 22d May, protest against it. On the same day I received from you a paper which, substantially, was nothing but a new copy of the same projét to which you had already had my formal answer. As you accompanied it with a note, hoping that "you might consider us as agreed upon the points," I sent you at once, on the 23d, an answer, of which you have quoted only the first lines. Read on, my lord, and you will find my whole meaning expressed as follows: "I am ready, at any moment, to sign, and put into immediate operation, a convention on general terms of entire reciprocity, as expressed in the commercial convention of 1515; leaving each country to regulate respectively its inland postage and transit rates, but applying uniform rates to packet ships and letters of both countries."

On Monday, the 25th, referring to my note of August 16th, I asked an interview of Lord Palmerston, for the purpose of bringing the matter to an immediate adjustment on the simple principle of reciprocity, thus disembarrassing the question of all that was complex, and leaving each country to make its own inland regulations to apply alike to correspondence of both nations. Lord Palmerston could give me no answer, but he understood me perfectly.

I cannot see how I could have acted more explicitly; or how it is possible for my views to have been open to misconception. And how it was, after this note of mine to you of October 23d, and this interview with Lord Palmerston, that you invited me to your house to conclude our postal convention in due form.

And now to the subject itself. As an individual citizen of the United States, I, in common with many, I trust with a majority, out of love to the American Union, wish to see in the United States one uniform rate of cheap postage. I believe it will be established as soon as possible; but the decision is with Congress. As minister, I can offer to British correspondence every advantage which, now or hereafter, may be offered to Americans themselves. I cannot offer more.

The two countries are planning what, if carried into effect, will be one of the most wonderful results of civilization—a regular semi-weekly postal intercourse by steam across the Atlantic between the kindred people of England and America. I hope this great enterprise, so fraught with the elements of public happiness, friendship, and prosperity, is not be embarrassed by your fear of making "*sacrifices*" in admitting us to our undoubted right, and by your attempting to gain advantages in a postal convention. There is no ground for it in equity. The light-house charges alone, whch England puts upon our ships, and which America does not put upon English ships, are incalculably greater in amount than all the gains you could derive from any postal treaty with us that you could devise.

I am sorry to write so long a letter. My motive, in wish-

ing this matter brought promptly to a close on the basis I have offered, rests on my disposition to consult the opinions and interests of the commercial men and the public of the two countries. That basis—presented to her Majesty's government in my note of August 16; renewed, as "the simple reciprocity arrangement," in our projét sent you October 6; repeated in my note to you of October 23d; enforced in my interview with Lord Palmerston, on October 29th; approved by Mr. Johnson, in his letter of January 12th, 1848; brought again before you in my interview of February 7th; re-stated in my note of the 15th, and now annexed to this note in detail—is, in my judgment, the best possible for British interests, and the only perfectly fair and practicable one. I hope your lordship will view it as every one does from whose experience I have sought light. Your lordship's candor must pronounce it unobjectionable.

I remain, &c.,

GEORGE BANCROFT.

The Marquis Clanricarde, &c.

[Enclosure.]

Reply on behalf of the United States postmaster general, to the propositions of the British postmaster general, for a postal convention made on the 22d of October, 1847.

The American government, in its postal arrangements with her Majesty's government, agrees in desiring the greatest facilities for correspondence between the two countries; seeks to diminish rather than increase the present rates of postage; and offers and accepts "principles of perfect reciprocity," as the basis of an arrangement.

The service requires inland carriage in America, sea conveyance, and inland carriage in the British isles.

The sea conveyance is the same for both. The inland carriage differs in distance; and, from difference in density in population, in cost, and in productiveness. The distance from Liverpool to the remotest point in the British isles is but a few hundred miles. From Boston to Mobile, New Orleans, Galveston, and Austin, is further, by the mail routes, than from London to Constantinople, Smyrna, and Cairo. Many post offices in the United States are as far asunder as the whole breadth of the Atlantic. The river course from Pittsburgh to New Orleans is a mail route, thronged with mail boats every day; and the distance is greater than the distance from Halifax to the United Kingdom. The regular mail route from Boston to New Orleans uses steamboats twice or three times, and each time for a distance many times greater than across the British channel. The line from Boston or New York to St. Johns, passes over Lake Champlain for a distance greater than the distance between England and France, or England and Belgium. A postage in America of two cents, of five cents, or of ten cents, according to distance, leaves the post office still a burthen on the treasury.

Her Majesty's government is fully aware of these things; it has introduced the penny postage in Great Britain, but not in Canada.

Reply to the first proposition.

Each country shall establish its own inland rates; and letters sent from one country shall be received, and treated in the offices of the other, as letters originating in the latter country.

There shall, in addition to such inland rates, be one uniform sea rate, of which the British government may fix the amount.

The American government would prefer the sea rates, as follows:

On single letters, under half an ounce, one uniform sea rate of seven pence half-penny, or fifteen cents.

On newspapers, periodicals, and pamphlets, one uniform rate of one half-penny the printed sheet or ounce; but editors and proprietors of newspapers might exchange papers free of postage.

N. B.—As two cents are a very little less than a penny, if America collects at two cents the penny, and England in sterling money, England should account to America at 484 cents the pound sterling, and America to England at 480 cents the pound sterling; one shilling being $24\frac{1}{5}$ cents, and a pound being, not 480 cents, but 484 cents.

Reply to the second proposition.

The payment of this sea rate shall be optional in either country;

Or, the respective inland rates may be combined with the sea rate, and the payment of the whole combined rate may be made optional in either country;

Or, if the British government takes ten pence, or twenty cents, as the sea rate, the combined rate between Liverpool or Southampton and New York, or Liverpool and Boston, may be twelve pence only, or twenty-four cents, viz: ten pence for the sea rate, and one penny inland rate for each country. For letters sent forward in America, some further inland postage is required by the nature of the American continent, as explained. But that further sum might be charged and collected in America, and the British government have no trouble about it.

Reply to the third proposition.

Whatever postage is made optional is to be accounted for. The sums representing the sea rate shall belong to the country by which the packet conveying the letter shall be furnished. The sums representing the respective inland rates, shall belong to the respective countries performing the inland services.

Reply to the fourth proposition.

Each country shall account to the other according to the actual number and amount of postages.

Reply to the fifth proposition.

On letters destined for countries, foreign or colonial, the country receiving and transmitting the letter shall charge, in lieu of inland postage, the transit postage that would be charged upon letters for the same destination, and posted by residents at the place where the packet may arrive.

Reply to the sixth proposition.

Each country shall grant to the other closed mails; the rate of postage to be charged on such correspondence to be the same as that levied on ordinary transit letters.

Reply to the seventh proposition.

Optional payment of postage may be established between the United States and British North America.

Lord Clanricarde to Mr. Bancroft.

General Post Office,
February 18, 1848.

Dear Sir: I regret very much that your letter of the 15th instant holds out no hopes of our being enabled to resume our negotiations.

You inform me that the sanction of Congress would be necessary for the acceptance of the proposition made by the chancellor of the exchequer and myself. But we cannot doubt that, if asked by the executive government, such sanction might easily be obtained. The President has already, in his late speech, recommended that additional power, in regard to postal regulations, should be entrusted to the proper authorities.

The objection taken to our proposal by the Postmaster General of the United States, is specious, but it is not solid. Experience has proved—what indeed it is easy to comprehend—that a calculation of the distances which letters may be carried, gives no just measure of the cost of postal arrangements. The transport of mail bags is but a small portion of the expenses of a well organized post office; and the comparison made by Mr. Johnson between the territorial extent of the American Union, and that of the British isles cannot be fairly instituted—as affecting the question in hand—unless Mr. Johnson can show, that throughout the entire of the United States, the post office system is as perfect as it is in England.

Be that, however, as it may, it is not upon any comparison of service, or loss, or of profits to either country, that the chancellor of the exchequer and I rest the proposition we have had the honor

to submit to you. Neither do we make any claim for England on account of the efforts by which the present facilities of communication have been obtained. We seek no partial advantage. We offer reciprocal and general benefits. We have considered solely how we could attain the greatest amount of accommodation for the public on both sides of the Atlantic, with due regard to the expenses which must be incurred.

This is the basis upon which we have framed our proposal; and, being fully convinced that it is the best calculated to effect the purpose professed by both governments alike, to that proposal we must adhere.

If, therefore, it is not within your power to renew our negotiations by an acceptance of the uniform and equally divided inland rate, and of the packet rate to be equally levied and equitably paid—which we have proposed—I have no alternative but to transmit, in official form, through the treasury and the foreign office, the offer we have made, and by which we must advise her Majesty's government to abide.

I remain, &c.,

CLANRICARDE.

The Hon. GEORGE BANCROFT.

Mr. Bancroft to Lord Palmerston.

90 EATON SQUARE,
21*st February*, 1848.

The undersigned, envoy extraordinary and minister plenipotentiary of the United States of America, begs leave to call the attention of Viscount Palmerston, her Britannic Majesty's principal secretary of state for foreign affairs, to the proposition for a postal convention, which he had the honor to address to Lord Palmerston, on the sixteenth day of August, in the year 1847, and to which his lordship has not made reply.

This delay, on the part of her Majesty's government, enables the undersigned to communicate to Lord Palmerston a memorandum which defines more precisely some points in the proposition referred to; and he requests Lord Palmerston to attach this memorandum to his letter of the 16th of August last, and to take it into consideration in connexion with that proposition.

The undersigned takes occasion to urge Lord Palmerston to make an early and definitive answer; and he has the honor, &c.

GEORGE BANCROFT,

VISCOUNT PALMERSTON, &c., &c., &c.

[Enclosure.]

Memorandum: To be considered in connexion with Mr. Bancroft's note to Viscount Palmerston, of 16th August, 1847.

The American government, in a postal arrangement with her Majesty's government, desires the greatest facilities for correspondence between the two countries; seeks to diminish rather than increase the present rates of postage; and offers principles of perfect reciprocity as the basis of an arrangement.

The service requires inland carriage in America; sea conveyance; and inland carriage in the British isles.

The sea conveyance is the same for both. The inland carriage differs in distance; and, from difference in density of population, in cost, and in productiveness. The distance from Liverpool to the remotest point in the British isles, is but a few hundred miles. From Boston to Mobile, New Orleans, Galveston, and Austin, is further, by the mail routes, than from London to Constantinople, Smyrna, and Cairo. Many post offices in the United States, are as far asunder as the whole breadth of the Atlantic. The river course from Pittsburg to New Orleans, which is but a part of one of the great thoroughfares between the north and New Orleans, is a mail route, thronged with mail boats every day; and the distance is greater than the distance from Halifax to the United Kingdom. The regular mail route, from Boston to New Orleans, uses steamboats twice or three times, and each time for a distance many times greater than the distance across the British channel. The line from Boston or New York to St. Johns, passes over Lake Champlain for a distance greater than the distance between England and France, or France and Belgium. A postage in America of two cents, of five cents, or of ten cents, according to distance, leaves the post office still a burthen on the treasury. Her Majesty's government is fully aware of these things; it has introduced the penny postage in Great Britain, but not in Canada.

It is, therefore, proposed by the American government:

1st. That each country shall establish its own inland rates; and letters sent from one country, shall be received and treated in the offices of the other as letters originating in the latter country.

There shall, in addition to such inland rates, be one uniform sea rate, of which the British government may fix the amount. The American government would prefer the rates as follows:

On single letters, under half an ounce, one uniform sea rate of seven pence half-penny, or fifteen cents.

On newspapers, periodicals, and pamplets, one uniform rate of one half-penny the printed sheet or ounce.

But editors and publishers of newspapers might exchange papers free of postage.

N. B. As two cents are a very little less than a penny, if America collects at two cents the penny and England in sterling money, England should account to America at 484 cents the pound sterling, and America to England at 480 cents the pound sterling; one shil-

ling being 24$\frac{1}{5}$ cents, and a pound being not 480 cents, but 484 cents.

2d. The payment of this sea rate shall be optional in either country;

Or, the respective inland rates may be combined with the sea rate, and the payment of the whole combined rate may be made optional in either country;

Or, if the British government takes ten pence or twenty cents as the sea rate, the combined rate between Liverpool or Southampton and New York, or Liverpool and Boston, may be twelve pence only, or twenty-four cents, viz: ten pence for the sea rate, and one penny inland rate, for each country. For letters sent forward in America, some further inland postage is required by the nature of the American continent, as explained. But that further sum might be charged and collected in America, and the British government have no trouble about it.

3d. Whatever postage is made optional is to be accounted for. The sums representing the sea rate shall belong to the country by which the packet conveying the letter shall be furnished. The sums representing the respective inland rates shall belong to the respective countries performing the inland services.

4th. Each country shall account to the other according to the actual number and amount of postages.

5th. On letters destined for countries foreign or colonial, the country receiving and transmitting the letter shall charge, in lieu of inland postage, the transit postage that would be charged upon letters for the same destination, and posted by residents at the place where the packet may arrive.

6th. Each country shall grant to the other closed mails; the rate of postage to be charged on such correspondence to be the same as that levied on ordinary transit letters.

7th. Optional payment of postage may be established between the United States and British North America.